

Sunset Strip SEV Licence Renewal 2020 - United Voices of the World Response

As the trade union representing strippers working in Sunset Strip we make this submission in support of the application.

We request that Westminster Council responds to this renewal application positively and renews the club's SEV licence.

Sunset Strip provides a regular source of income for approximately 100 women (dancers and other staff.) Any job loss will have an immediate and disproportionately detrimental effect on women's livelihood and their ability to support themselves and their families. Under the Public Sector Equality Act, the council has a duty to eliminate discrimination and advance equality. We believe that any discriminatory threat to women's livelihood (and, therefore their safety and wellbeing) will be against the principle of the PSEA.

There is no evidence that strip clubs are a source of crime and disorder. In fact, some studies show that the heightened security inside and around clubs (with enhanced CCTV and additional security personnel), contributes to a safer environment in the area surrounding the club, which extends to workers, visitors, and the general public and helps to prevent instances of public nuisance.

Sunset Strip is part of Soho's vibrant nightlife culture and economy and there is, clearly, an interest from workers and customers to keep them open. If closed, there is the potential for a highly regulated licensed venue to resume business in a different form underground. This would mean that conditions can't be regulated and dancers will have no access to legal protections and union representation. In short, women are safer in licensed venues than they would be in an informal, underground clubs, private parties or working on their own.

We are working with strippers in Sunset Strip and other clubs across Westminster, as well as with other agencies to ensure that workers in Sunset Strip have access to information regarding their legal rights and an opportunity to join a trade union, which would represent them individually and collectively in disputes with management. We ask that the council support strippers in their organising efforts to make strip clubs safer and fairer workplaces. We also ask that the council views particularly positively Sunset Strip's licence application as they are committed to implementing improvements to workers safety, participation and rights.